

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PL

SUBJECT: PASTORAL LETTER

I. WE UNDERSTAND THAT TEXT OF WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE NOVEMBER 29 ON THIS SUBJECT IS INCLUDED IN TODAY'S WIRELESS FILE. FOLLOWING REUTERS DESPATCH CARRIED PAGE 3 NEW YORK TIMES OF NOVEMBER 29 DATELINED WARSAW NOVEMBER 28 AND HEADLINED "POLISH BISHOPS CHARGE BLACKMAIL IS BEING USED TO ENFORCE ATHEISM":

- POLAND'S ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS TODAY CHALLENGED COMMUNIST CLAIMS OF TOLERANCE AND CHARGED THAT CATHOLIC STUDENTS WERE THREATENED AND BLACKMAILED UNDER WHAT THEY TERMED AN OFFICIAL CONSPIRACY TO ENFORCE ATHEISM.

- IN A PASTORAL LETTER READ IN ALL POLAND'S CATHOLIC CHURCHES, STEFAN CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI AND THE BISHOPS LISTED AREAS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE IN THIS STRONGLY RELIGIOUS COUNTRY.

- THE BISHOPS AGREED ON THEIR LETTER AT A MEETING
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IN SEPTEMBER SHORTLY AFTER THE COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER,

EDLARD GIEREK, MOVING TO UNIFY THE COUNTRY AFTER FOOD RIOTS IN THE SUMMER, TOLD A WORKERS' RALLY, "THERE ARE NO CONFLICTS BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE, THERE IS A BROAD FIELD FOR FRUITFUL COOPERATION. SUCH IS THE STAND OF OUR PARTY AND SUPREME AUTHORITIES."

- THE BISHOPS' RESPONSE WAS DELAYED UNTIL NOW TO AVOID AGGRAVATING TENSION BETWEEN WORKERS AND AUTHORITIES.

- OBSERVERS SAW IT AS LAYING DOWN TERMS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CHURCH, WITH ITS DEEP ROOTS IN NATIONALISM, AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY, RECOVERING FROM THE SHOCK OF THE SUMMER PROTESTS.

- THE STATEMENT CONDEMNED ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS FAITH AS A VIOLATION OF CITIZENS' RIGHTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL CHARTERS AND THE POLISH CONSTITUTION.

- A LARGE MAJORITY OF POLES ARE BELIEVERS, IT SAID, AND WHEN THE STATE ATTACKS RELIGION IT ATTACKS THEM. "EMBITTERED PEOPLE DO NOT MAKE GOOD WORKERS," THE BISHOPS SAID. "THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BELIEF IS BURDENSOME AND HAZARDOUS, EVOKING REACTION."

- "REGARDLESS OF QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS AND TALENTS, LEADING POSITIONS IN THE PROFESSIONS WERE CLOSED UNLESS CANDIDATES PROFESSED ATHEISM," THEY SAID.

- THE STRUGGLE HAS MOVED INTO CULTURE AND THE MASS MEDIA, WITH "SEX, DIVORCE, ABORTION, PORNOGRAPHY, BLASPHEMY" IN THE THEATER, FILMS, TELEVISION, RADIO AND BOOKS, THE BISHOPS' STATEMENT SAID.

- "ACTIONS AGAINST STUDENTS, THREATS, BLACKMAIL, LONG AND ONEROUS INTERROGATIONS" WERE DESIGNED TO WEAN THEM AWAY FROM ACADEMIC CHAPLAINS AND CHURCH LECTURES, THE BISHOPS ADDED.

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- CHILDREN IN SUMMER CAMPS, SCHOOLS AND STATE HOMES WERE TOLD NOT TO WEAR RELIGIOUS MEDALS OR CROSSES, AND SEMINARIANS WERE CALLED UP FOR ARMY SERVICE CONTRARY TO CHURCH-STATE UNDERSTANDINGS, THE STATEMENT SAID.

- BISHOPS CALL FOR VIGILANCE

- THE BISHOPS' STATEMENT ADDED THAT A STATE OFFICIAL HAD ADMITTED IN AN INTERVIEW THAT STAGGERING OF SCHOOL VACATIONS AND CHANGED SYLLABUSES WERE AIMED AT WEAKENING CATHOLIC COHESION. SUNDAY EXCURSIONS ARE PART OF A CAMPAIGN TO ERODE CHURCH ATTENDANCE, THEY MAINTAINED.

- "THE CHURCH IS UNDER ATTACK," THEIR STATEMENT CONCLUDED. "BE SOBER, ALERT, VIGILANT."

2. REQUEST YOU FORWARD FULL TEXT OF PASTORAL LETTER WHEN AVAILABLE.

ROBINSON

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